



Greenlife Industry Australia

YOUR LEVY @ WORK

MEDIA RELEASE

Western Australia's nursery industry on alert with detection of Polyphagous shot-hole borer

11 November 2021 – For the first time in Australia, the exotic beetle, Polyphagous Shot-Hole Borer (PSHB) was detected in East Fremantle, Western Australia and has now spread beyond its established quarantine zone.

Native to south-east Asia, the PSHB attacks a wide range of plants by tunnelling into trunks, stems and branches which can cause tree death, posing a significant risk to Australia's horticultural sector.

First detected in October 2021, the Western Australia Department of Primary Industries and Regional Development (DPRID) has now identified fifteen infested properties and four properties with suspected quarantine detections that are awaiting examination, with seven of these suspected infested properties detected outside of the existing quarantine zone initially set up to contain the spread.

The adult beetles and their larvae can be hard to spot as they spend most of their lives inside trees, making detection and subsequent management a challenge. PSHB has been recorded boring into tree branches and trunks as small as 20mm in diameter.

Positive samples have been collected from six different tree species including Box elder maple, Coral tree, Sophora, Poinciana and Mango.

National Biosecurity Manager at Greenlife Industry Australia, John McDonald, is urging all Western Australian tree stock growers, and any other growers that may have received advanced tree stock from WA, to follow the latest biosecurity alerts and be vigilant with monitoring trees for damage from this emerging pest.

"This pest has proven to have devastating impacts overseas, damaging tree crops in Israel, California and South Africa, causing extensive production and financial losses," Mr McDonald said.

"In South Africa, where it is has become an established pest, the removal and treatment of dead trees in urban areas has caused significant economic impacts.

"Affecting both horticultural and urban plants, establishment of this beetle in Australia would have significant impacts on amenity trees, native vegetation, and industry, particularly avocado, citrus, and stone fruit."

Mr McDonald leads the national nursery industry biosecurity and sustainable plant production program which is funded by Hort Innovation using the nursery research and development levy with additional funds from the Australian Government. The program includes working with a wider biosecurity network to help limit the spread of exotic pests and diseases.

"Protecting our industry from this pest requires us all to remain aware of the risk it poses to Australia's entire horticultural sector," he said.

"If growers detect any signs of PSHB, they should immediately contact the Exotic Plant Pest Hotline as early detection is vital to help mitigate the spread of this unwanted pest species."

All growers are encouraged to report any signs of borers in host plants to the Exotic Plant Pest Hotline on 1800 084 881

For useful identification information and images, access the on-line pest identification platform www.pestid.com.au



Greenlife Industry Australia

YOUR LEVY @ WORK

The 'National biosecurity and sustainable plant production program' (NY20001) project is funded by Hort Innovation using nursery research and development levy and funds from the Australian Government.

ENDS